DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 625 CG 017 826

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TITLE Survey of Health Psychology Training among Counseling Psychology Programs.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the symposium "Counseling Psychology and Health Behavior: Current Status and Future Possibilities" at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (92nd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 24-28, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; College Students; Counseling Services; *Counselor Training; Higher Education; Practicums; Program Development
IDENTIFIERS *Health Psychology

ABSTRACT

Health psychology has emerged as a potentially distinct specialty within counseling psychology. To determine the nature and extent of health psychology training in counseling psychology programs, 55 training directors of counseling psychology programs that are either members of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP) or are approved, or being approved, by the American Psychological Association were surveyed. The survey focused on identifying information about the program, course work in health psychology available either within or outside the program, applied experiences, research interests, and placement. The results of the survey (response rate of 89%) showed that almost 60% of the programs had no health psychology course work. Those programs offering relevant courses indicated courses focusing on substance abuse, disability, general health psychology, and rehabilitation. Fifty-nine percent of the programs reported practicum placements in health psychology. An average of 1.5 faculty per program was reported to have health psychology as an interest area. Students reported a moderate interest in the subject area, with 18% of them participating in related research. A moderate percentage (35-40%) of the programs reported no internships or job placements in health psychology related settings. These findings suggest that there is a moderate interest in health psychology research and practice among counseling psychology faculty and students. (The survey questionnaire is attached.) (BL)

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# Survey of Health Psychology Training among Counseling Psychology Programs

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In G. Howard (Chair), Counseling psychology and health behavior: Current status and future possibilities. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, 1984.

CG 017826

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Survey of Health Psychology Training among Counseling Psychology Programs

Recently, the National Working Conference on Education and Training in Health Psychology was held (Stone, 1983). Several major recommendations were endorsed by working groups at the conference; among these was the recommendation that health psychology should be a distinct specialty with training at the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral levels separate from training provided by already-recognized specialties. The issue of preparation for practice in professional psychology in general continues to evoke interest and debate, so it is unlikely that one model of health psychology training will be clearly defined and widely accepted in the near future. Yet, the Conference did establish health psychology core areas for curriculum (i.e., social bases of health systems and behavior) as well as practicum/internship goals and objectives which represent an initial step in establishing training methods.

A scan of recent issues of the Journal of Counseling Psychology, as well as The Personnel and

Guidance Journal and The Counseling Psychologist, reveals that counseling psychology has been gradually increasing its involvement in health psychology research and practice areas. For example, Goodman, Sewell, and Jampol (1984) reported a study in which the life stresses and social supports of college students were related to the students' decisions to seek psychological counseling. Prior, Goodyear and Holen (1983) compared the effectiveness of EMG biofeedback training with Type A and Type B Behavior Pattern adults. The use of two counseling treatments, anxiety management training and relaxation as self-control, to treat generalized anxiety among medical outpatients was investigated by Cragan and Deffenbacher (1984). Klippel and DeJoy (1984), in commenting upon the potential contributions of counseling psychology to health psychology and behavioral medicine, argued that the strengths of counseling psychology as a discipline would suggest its involvement in the following areas of health psychology: interpersonal skills training for health care providers, particularly physicians; work within

community education programs, such as hospices; and counseling patients concerning adjustment to physical disability and illness. From the research reports mentioned earlier, and those which also appear in counseling psychology journals, it seems that counseling psychologists have increased their research and practice involvement in appropriate health psychology areas.

Yet, it is difficult to know to what extent, if any, counseling psychology students are receiving training in the scientific and applied aspects of health psychology. While journal articles and convention presentations reflect an apparent increase of interest in the area, and data from the annual survey of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP) indicates that many counseling psychology students seek internships in health service settings, the nature and extent of health psychology-relevant training within counseling psychology programs is unknown. Therefore, a survey of all training programs that are members of CCPTP, and APA-approved programs not in CCPTP, was conducted

to determine the nature of health psychology training in counseling psychology programs.

## Method

### Subjects

Fifty-five counseling psychology training programs were identified as either belonging to the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs and/or being approved by the American Psychological Association. The survey was sent to the training director of each program. Two follow-up mailings followed the initial survey mailing. A total of 49 useable responses were obtained, a return rate of 89 percent. Table 1 contains identifying information concerning the sample.

### Questionnaire

The survey had five focus areas: identifying information about the program, course work in health psychology, applied experiences in health psychology, faculty and student research interests, and internship/job placement in health psychology. Table 2 contains a copy of the survey questionnaire.

## Results

### Course Work

Training directors were asked to indicate course work in health psychology that was available to students both within and outside the program. Matarazzo's (1980) definition of health psychology was given to guide identification of relevant course work. As can be seen in Table 3, almost 60 percent of the counseling psychology programs returning the survey had no relevant course work within the program. For those programs with relevant course work, five programs indicated courses in the area of substance abuse/addiction/pharmacology, eight percent reported course work in the area of disability, 27 percent identified program course work in the general area of health psychology, and 12 percent identified course work in the area of rehabilitation. (It was possible for programs to report courses across more than one area.)

When asked to identify relevant course work outside of the program, 27 programs (55%) reported that none were available. The remaining programs identified courses in the areas of substance abuse/ addiction/pharmacology (10%), disability (10%), health

psychology and behavioral medicine (39%), and rehabilitation (4%).

Applied Experiences

Training directors were asked to indicate what applied experiences in health psychology were available to students, how supervision was provided for these experiences, and what types of activities were involved. As can be seen in Table 4, 59% of the programs returning the survey reported practicum placements or traineeships in health psychology that were available. Settings ranged from HMO's to various types of hospitals to family practice settings to internal medicine groups. As Table 4 indicates, the majority of supervision was provided by a combination of program faculty and agency staff. Students tended to spend time in these settings engaging in direct service, patient education, and assessment; treatment compliance and staff training were less popular although available activities.

Faculty and Student Interest in Health Psychology

Training directors were questionned regarding faculty and student interest in the area in several

ways. First, training directors were asked to indicate how many faculty in their counseling psychology program considered health psychology as "one of their interest areas." An average of 1.5 faculty per program (SD = 1.24, range = 1-5) were reported to have health psychology as an interest area. Secondly, training directors were asked to indicate on two Likert scales the degree of interest among students and faculty in health psychology. Students, on the average, were reported to have a moderate interest in health psychology (mean = 2.97, SD = .74) as were faculty (mean = 2.77, SD = .84). When asked to indicate what percent of students were participating in research or practice experiences related to health psychology, training directors reported that an average of 13% of their students were participating in research or practice experiences, with a range of 0 to 80% reported. A similar question concerning faculty resulted in an average of 20% of the faculty participating, with a range of 0 to 80%. Lastly, training directors were asked to indicate faculty and student research or practice interests as well as

publication titles. Tables 5 and 6 present all reported interests and publications by grouping. As can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, both faculty and student interests range widely over topics relevant to health psychology. However, there seems to be special interest in areas of adjustment to illness and disability, assessment, and counseling/educational interventions.

Internship/Job Placement

Lastly, a question was included on how many students over the last five years had interned at settings where health psychology was a primary focus and had obtained initial job placement in health service settings. Table 7 reports on the results of these questions. As can be seen, a moderate percentage of programs (35-40%) report that none of their students intern in health psychology settings or obtain jobs in health service settings. The remainder of programs report internship and job placements in a variety of settings, primarily Veterans' Administration medical centers, university medical centers, and general medical/surgical hospitals.

## Discussion

The primary finding of this survey is that there is, at best, a moderate interest in health psychology research and practice areas among faculty and students in counseling psychology training programs. Approximately half of all programs do not have relevant coursework available to students; faculty and students, according to training directors, report moderate levels of interest in the area; and few students intern or obtain initial job placements in settings where health psychology is a primary focus.

These results may not be surprising given the recent articulation of the health psychology area. Faculty tend, by their research and practice, to develop similar research and practice interests among students. Given low faculty turnover, it may be several years before a strong health psychology interest appears via available coursework, published research, and training placements. On the other hand, there are a few programs where the level of interest is very high, faculty and students publish relevant research, and students obtain training and jobs in

health service settings.

Given counseling psychology's traditional philosophical emphasis on developing strengths, the research and practice areas cited seem to "fit" well within the field. "Adjustment to various illnesses and medical procedures" and "interventions" are the primary interest/publication areas reported. Developing coursework and training experiences targeted to these specific areas of counseling psychology's interface with health psychology may be the most reasonable next step in the recognition of health behaviors as a potential area of research and application for the field of counseling psychology.

References

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Table 1

Identifying Information about Programs Participating in the Survey

| APA Approval | Yes | No | In Process |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 32(65%) | 6(12%) | 11(23%) |

| Department Location | | Faculty FTE | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dept. of Psychology | 11 | Mean | 8.23 |
| Dept. of Educational Psych. | 13 | SD | 4.33 |
| Dept. of Counselor Education | 9 | Range | 2-20 |
| Separate Dept. of Counseling Psychology | 12 | (Missing) items | 3 |
| Joint program across 2 or more departments | 4 | | |

| Number of Students | | |
|---|---|---|
| MA Level | Mean | 37.59 |
| | SD | 49.56 |
| | Range | 0-200 |
| Ph.D. | Mean | 47.55 |
| | SD | 28 |
| | Range | 6-140 |

Faculty Memberships

Division 17

| | |
|---|---|
| Mean | 6.15 |
| SD | 2.89 |

Division 38

11 Programs (22%) have at least one faculty who is a member.

Society for Behavioral Medicine

7 Programs (14%) have at least one faculty who is a member.

Table 2

Survey

1. Please provide some identifying information about your program.

   APA approval: ____Yes ____No ____In Process

   Location: ____Department of Psychology ____Department of Counselor Education

   ____Department of Ed. Psychology ____Separate Department of Counseling Psychology

   ____Joint program across two or more departments

   Number of faculty FTE ____

   Number of students M.A. ____ Ph.D. ____

For questions 2 through 9, use the following definition of health psychology:

The use of psychology in the promotion and maintenance of health; the prevention and treatment of illness; the identification of etiologic and diagnostic correlates of health, illness, and related dysfunction; and the analysis and improvement of the health care system and health policy formation (taken from Matarazzo, American Psychologist, 1980, p. 815).

2. What coursework in health psychology is available to your students? Please star any course that is required and attach curriculum program guide if available.

   courses in your program (please list title):

   courses outside your program (please list title and department):

3. What applied experiences (e.g., practicum placements, traineeships) in health psychology are available to your students? Please star any experience that is required.

   How is direct supervision provided for these experiences?

   ____Program faculty ____Agency staff ____Combination of above

   What types of activities are involved?

   ____Direct service ____Patient education ____Treatment compliance

   ____Assessment ____Risk factor modification ____Staff training/development

   ____Other (please list: )

4. How many of your faculty consider health psychology as one of their interest areas?

   _____

   Please list a few example research or practice health psychology interest areas of your faculty:

5. What, in general, is the degree of interest among your students in health psychology?

____Very strong ____Strong ____Moderate ____Little ____Virtually none

Approximately what percent of your students are participating in research or practice experiences related to health psychology _____%

6. What, in general, is the degree of interest among your faculty in health psychology?

____Very strong ____Strong ____Moderate ____Little ____Virtually none

Approximately what percent of your faculty are participating in research or practice experiences related to health psychology _____%

7. Has your faculty published in the area of health psychology? If so, please list a few example publications.

8. Have your students published in the area of health psychology? If so, please list a few example publications.

9. In the last 5 years, how many of your students have interned at settings where health psychology was a primary focus? _____

Please list the settings:

Among the initial job placements of the graduates of your program in the last 5 years, how many were health service settings? _____

Please list settings and job titles:

10. Number of your faculty who are members of Division 17 _____ Division 38 _____ Society for Behav. Med. _____

Table 3

Course Work in Health Psychology

| Courses in counseling psychology program | Courses outside counseling psychology program |
|---|---|
| Substance Abuse/Addiction/ Pharmacology (n = 5; 10%) | Substance Abuse/Addiction/ Pharmacology (n = 5; 10%) |
| Course Titles: | Course Titles: |
| Alcoholism Treatment<br>Addiction<br>Pharmacology | Substance Abuse<br>Pharmacology<br>Psychology of Foods |
| Disability (n = 4; 8%) | Disability (n = 5; 10%) |
| Course Titles: | Course Titles: |
| Psychological Aspects of Disability<br>Physical, Mental and Emotional Diseases<br>Neuropsychological Assessment | Stress Physiology<br>Medical Aspects of Disability<br>Geriatrics |
| Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine (n = 13; 26.5%) | Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine (n = 19; 39%) |
| Course Titles: | Course Titles: |
| Health Psychology<br>Social Psychology of Health & Illness<br>Behavioral Medicine<br>Pediatric Psychology<br>Stress, Anxiety, and Coping | Health Professions in Education<br>Evaluation in Health Professions in Educ.<br>Medical Psychology<br>Behavioral Medicine<br>Health Program Planning<br>Stress and Illness<br>Health Psychology<br>Biomedicine<br>Health Care Policy |
| Rehabilitation (n = 6; 12%) | Rehabilitation (n = 2; 4%) |
| Course Titles: | Course Titles: |
| Rehabilitation Counseling<br>Biofeedback<br>Stress Management<br>Holistic Counseling | Health Promotion/Wellness<br>Evaluation of Health Delivery Systems |

Table 4

Applied Experiences in Health Psychology

| Types of Experiences (Number of programs citing) | Types of Supervision | Types of Activities |
|---|---|---|
| HMO: 2 | Program Faculty: 2 | Direct Svc: 29 |
| VA: 2 | Agency Staff: 7 | Patient Education: 26 |
| VA: 8 | Combination of Both: 22 | Assessment: 25 |
| Rehabilitation Settings: 5 | | Treatment Compliance: 21 |
| Hospital-Pain Unit: 5 | | Staff Training: 16 |
| Hospital-Burn Unit: 1 | | Risk Modification: 9 |
| Hospital-General: 9 | | Research: 2 |
| Hospital-Pediatric/ Adult Oncology: 2 | | |
| Hospital-Family Practice: 1 | | |
| Hospital-Teaching: 3 | | |
| Hospital-Pediatric: 2 | | |
| Wellness Center: 1 | | |
| Dialysis Center: 1 | | |
| State Hospital: 3 | | |
| Internal Medicine Group: 2 | | |
| Family Practice Group: 1 | | |
| Substance Abuse Ctr: 1 | | |
| General "Available" Settings: 7 | | |
| None: 20 | | |

Table 5

Faculty Health Psychology Interest Areas

| | |
|---|---|
| **Assessment/Methodology** | |
| Program Evaluation | Assessment of Effective Radiology Resident Performances |
| Neuropsychological Assessment* | |
| Measuring Coping Responses/Resources* | Assessing Effective Genetic Counseling |
| **Personality Characteristics Associated with Health/Illness** | |
| Psychological Factors of Coronary Heart Disease | |
| Concepts of Health, Illness, Body Parts and Functions | |
| Anxiety Disorders | |
| **Specific Illnesses/Treatments** | |
| Cancer* | Bone Marrow Transplant |
| PMS | Arthritis |
| Physically Handicapped | Type A Behavior Pattern* |
| Low Back Pain | Bulemia* |
| Dialysis | Stress among Children |
| Coronary By-pass | Headache |
| Sleep Disorders | Occupational Stress |
| **Interventions** | |
| Moderating/Arresting Somatic Symptoms | Substance Abuse Counseling |
| Using Imagery in Cancer Treatments | Cardiovascular Disease-Primary Prevention |
| Smoking Cessation* | Life Skills Training |
| Treatment Compliance* | Biofeedback* |
| Stress Management* | Adherence to Lifestyle Changes |
| Holistic Counseling | Impaired Physicians |
| Weight Reduction* | Wellness Education* |
| Pain Management | |
| **Training** | |
| Interpersonal Skills Training among Physicians | |
| Training Physicians to Communicate Stressful Information to Patients | |
| Contributions of Various Disciplines to Staffing | |
| **Special Populations** | |
| Women's Health Care | |
| Health Care among the Aging* | |
| Families of Patients | |
| Critical-Care Nurses | |

* Cited more than once

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Table 6

Faculty and Student Health Psychology Publications

| |
|---|
| **Assessment/Methodology** |
| Factor structure of McGill Pain Questionnaire |
| Assessment of Type A Behavior Pattern |
| Neuropsychological Assessment |
| Vocational Diagnosis through Assessment of Functional Limitations |
| Assessment of Effective Radiology Resident Performance |
| **Personality Characteristics Associated with Health/Illness** |
| Clinical Variables in a Cold Pressor Task |
| Health-Protective Attitudes and Behaviors |
| Children's Conceptions of Body Parts and Functions |
| Personality Correlates of Alcoholism |
| Psychologic Functioning of Patients with Anticipatory Vomiting |
| **Interventions** |
| Health Counseling |
| Stress Inoculation for Patients with Anticipatory Vomiting |
| Treatment for Obesity |
| Coping Strategies for Childbirth |
| Smoking Cessation |
| Pain Management |
| Stress Management |
| Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease |
| **Adjustment** |
| Hemodialysis Patient-Nurse Interaction and Quality of Care |
| Stress in Critical Care Nursing |
| Life Change and Illness |
| **Training** |
| Interpersonal Skills Training for Physicians |
| Peer Counseling Training among Hemodialysis Patients |
| Training in Family Practice Settings |

Table 7

Internship and Initial Job Placements in Health Service Settings

Internship (Number placed in last 5 years)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mean | 8.00 |
| SD | 6.47 |

Settings (Number of programs citing)

| | |
|---|---|
| General med/surg hospital | 14 |
| VA | 13 |
| University medical center | 13 |
| CMHC | 5 |
| State hospital | 2 |
| HMO | 1 |
| Substance abuse clinic | 1 |
| Rehabilitation center | 1 |
| Student health center | 1 |
| Counseling center | 1 |
| Hospital for joint diseases | 1 |

Initial Job Placements (Percent of graduates in last 5 years)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mean | 13% |
| SD | 16% |

Settings (Number of programs citing)

| | |
|---|---|
| General hospital | 12 |
| Teaching hospital | 11 |
| VA | 10 |
| CMHC | 4 |
| Medical School | 4 |
| Psychiatry dept. (medical school) | 2 |
| Rehabilitation | 2 |
| MH/MR setting | 1 |
| Prison | 1 |
| HMO | 1 |
| Substance abuse | 1 |
| Dental school | 1 |
| Hospital (administration) | 1 |
| Family practice | 1 |
| Eating disorders clinic | 1 |
| U.S. Army | 1 |